

The Young Prince of the Ruala, Amir Fuaz

Within sight of Jauf opens out the great, red-sand 133 •
desert of the Nufud, which extends more than three 101
hundred miles from east to west and nearly two hundred 162
miles from north to south. Its northern half, called El-
Labbe, forms the proper grazing ground of the Ruala.
Their real home is there. The southern part is held by
the Shammar Bedouins, who have made Hayil, on the
southern edge of the Nufud, their trading centre.

Until after the Great War, the Shammar were ruled
by Ibn Rashid, a renegade governor of the Ibn Sa'ûd 643
family, who, with his Negro bodyguard, had rebelled 669
against his masters and had taken Hayil. Ibn Sa'ûd, how-
ever, succeeded in recovering that dominant position,
which secured him undisputed power in Central Arabia
(Nejd, Kasim, and Hejaz).

The efforts Ibn Sa'ûd made to weld all the tribes into
one national unit, his subjugation, in campaign after
campaign, of all *Sbiyukhs* (*Sbeykhs*) who resisted him,
are well known. Now, at the time of my first sojourn
in the land of the Bedouins, this Ibn Rashid, the traitor
governor, had still the greater part of Inner Arabia
under his power. He became so completely sovereign
that his former masters, the Ibn Sa'ûd family, had to
live for decades in exile, while the "Black Princes" held
sway over the towns and oases as well as the many
Bedouin tribes of Central Arabia. In the history of Ara-
bia there are few bolder achievements than Ibn Sa'ûd's
recovery, with a mere handful of men, of his capital,
Riyadh, his subjugation of Hayil and the Shammar,
until he, adding success to success, became at length the

The Heirs of Ishmael

487 the brilliant blue of the skies. Bumpy, dried mud-paths ran through the bare fields and thin, grey meadows. Then came rolling plains, across which ran a puzzling confusion of paths. On the edge of the steppe stood a [486] Syrian Custom's station, where our passports were examined. At last we could leave the overland route; and now, without paths or signposts to guide us, we were in the uncharted desert. Our automobile raced over the hard, dry, pebble-strewn soil, ever eastward, along a never-ending, narrow tongue of land that seemed to dip deeper and deeper into a boundless, shimmering sea. A cloudless sky rose above us and on either side were misty gleams of water over which the air quivered. Suddenly, like apparitions out of the haze, appeared some Arab [492] sheep-breeders. They had but few camels and horses with them, but they rode on asses—a sign of their decadence. They were Fua're. We noticed them as we bore away towards a sheet of water glistening in an elongated depression of the desert.

● 133 Mirages were frequent and often incredibly deceptive. Only with difficulty was it possible to distinguish the real rain pools, which were only a foot or so deep with their surfaces ruffled by the wind, from the phantom pools, whose surfaces would be smooth and glassy. Suddenly we noticed ahead of us numerous flocks of sheep. Almost breast-deep they were crossing the flooded land. Automatically I reduced speed, for I suddenly saw, not a hundred yards ahead, a gleam of water—a shallow lake—and we were driving straight into it. I twisted the steering-wheel round, and then only did I realize that what we saw was a dry trough filled with

Faris—"A Friend of God"

hot, glassy air. At full speed I drove into it towards the rain pools. 133●

Nearer and nearer came the sheep, when in an instant the whole picture changed. The long, wide pool had disappeared; not a trace of moisture was to be seen. Instead of gleaming waters, we saw milling around us a dusty mass of woolly beasts—thousands upon thousands of sheep and goats.

I stopped the car to let the animals pass. The shepherds rode over to us with their women and children, scrutinized us curiously and wished us peace. I distributed cigarettes and sweets, and in response the talkative nomads told us they were moving back to their home-pastures in the north, because other Bedouin tribes had disputed their territory with them. They passed on and the desert became empty again. 609 221 [578]

The Hamad lay before us, the North-Arabian uplands that seemed to extend into infinity: flat, hard soil, with nothing of any significance to break its level monotony for hundreds of miles southward and eastward. As we sped along, hour after hour, through this parched tableland, immense flocks of migratory birds would whirl up out of the camel-grass at our approach. They would fly some hundreds of yards before setting again, like a cloud, upon the earth. Again and again we started clumsy, desert bustards, and large coveys of pintail grouse took wing. These desert birds—about as large as a European partridge—feed mainly on the flaming red caterpillars, which are to be found on every blade and stalk in the otherwise arid waste. Once a small wolf broke cover and two foxes loped away into the distance. 133 136

The Heirs of Ishmael

● 133 We also came across a huge owl, which sat blinking and
136 bewildered by the daylight, and we brought our car to a standstill close beside it.

Unexpectedly, just before sunset, we had a shower of rain which greatly refreshed the dusty desert. The greater part of the night we passed stretched out on the bare sands in the shelter of a dry river-bed.

221 On the evening of the following day, after driving like mad, with a sand-storm on our heels, we came up with the Ruala. The great tribe was migrating northward in a body, its encampment sprawling beyond the range of vision, its vast herds spread out in all directions. A shallow depression held one cluster of some eighty tents of all sizes, their open fronts facing to leeward; and among them stood out the most spacious pavilion in Arabia, the famous tent of Nuri Sha'lan.

We drew up there, and my first question was for Amir Fuaz; but the young leader of the Ruala was not at home; he was on a visit to a clan, camping some distance from the main body.

❧ VII ❧

Death in the Desert

FARIS AND HIS band marched along in high spirits. The sky was blue, the earth a verdant green, the scented air full of sunshine; and from horizon to horizon stretched the wilderness in one unbroken expanse.

At times one lost the sense of progress. Were we standing still? Riding in a circle?—so unchanging was the landscape. Yet one never tired of it, nor could one have enough of this exhilarating motion.

Steppe, desert, rising and falling imperceptibly; ridge hardly distinguishable from valley; except, perhaps, that the valley still glistened a little from the last shower and showed a more vigorous touch of fresh green.

Three days we thus journeyed. For three days no tents, no herds; nothing but the empty wilderness under the serene sky; now gay with herbage, now grim with gravel, stones, and lava.

On the fourth day, from the edge of a steep escarpment, as from a sea-cliff, we suddenly saw spread before our eyes the Wadi Sirhan, here immensely wide. A medley of chalk-coloured banks rising from lime rock, stony plains, salt marshes, sand dunes, grey shrubs, tablelands, deep-furrowed, loamy beds of rain torrents, called *wudian*, covered with black rubble.

Towards the evening of the next day we reached Mayku', an old watering-place of the Ruala. Some hundreds of them were still under tents there in the shadow

The Heirs of Ishmael

312 of the grey hills, and we bivouacked with them. All
[106] through the night they kept watering their herds at the
deep well-holes, and we heard the incessant creaking of
the small wooden rollers in the primitive wooden bear-
ings, with their dripping ropes, some eighty feet long.

●133 A few hours' ride beyond Mayku' we entered the wide
dark tableland of Bsayta, the flattened remains of what
is probably the oldest mountain range in the Arabian
peninsula. A few inconsiderable summits, covered with a
fine film of sand, still rise from its surface, which ex-
tends for more than sixty miles—a perfectly level waste
without water, without pasture, on which it seems to
have hailed black gravel. At one stroke the blithe world
was changed; all round us was desolation. But gloomy
and eerie as Bsayta appeared at first sight, a few days in
it taught me to love this waste, with all its hopeless
melancholy. The solitude and stillness as of an abandoned
planet brooded over it. Now and then an oryx-antelope
or an ostrich fled at our approach. Very rarely did we
pass a shrub that was knee-high or see a green leaf or a
flower. No bird sang here; even snakes and lizards
[137] avoided this waste. Occasionally in summer, it depended
[252] on the rainfall, there grew a strange, rich crop in Bsayta
—the *sambh*, a low small-leaved plant, on whose twigs
small berries ripen, containing reddish-brown seed gran-
ules. These the Bedouins roast and grind into a dark,
bitter flour. Kneaded with sheep butter and dates, or
boiled in water into a sort of porridge, it becomes edible.

726 After renewing our water supply at the Hausa well,
we pushed on toward Bir Bair and into the northwestern
Wadi Sirhan, the proper grazing grounds of the Beni

❧ VIII ❧

Panther and Ostrich

SEVERAL DAYS WERE spent by us among the volcanic table-mountains of the Jabal Tubayk. Precipitous cliffs, riven and pinnacled rocks rise some six hundred feet from flower-sprinkled level pastures and valleys strewn with black lava boulders. It is a country of savage beauty, in which gazelles and game birds are numerous.

[There Faris and I, out after game, chanced to come on three tents tucked away in a hollow. They belonged to members of that curious folk, the Sulkan (singular: Sleyb)—nomadic hunters and handicraftsmen. In the popular sense they resemble the gypsies. Like them they doctor man and beast, love music, are fortune-tellers, and have a weakness for things occult and superstitious.

As hunters, trackers and scouts the Sulkan surpass the other Bedouins, and they know the desert better than any other nomads. Many a secluded water-hole is known only to them. Their origin is a mystery. They are few in number, but are held together by some sort of tribal organization, under a chief; and they pay tribute—"protection money"—to the Ruala and other Bedouin tribes. In return, each of these appoints from among its own tribesmen a "Brother" to the Sulkan, charged with looking after their interests.]

The Chief of the Sulkan was then one Ralib welde Tulihan, and it was to this young man that the little camp we had discovered belonged. Ralib, accompanied

❧ IX ❧

The Nufud

I HAD MY FIRST sight of the Nufud from the neighbourhood of the Shedad Umm-Kur. 133 ●

And what a sight! The waves of the red desert, rising and falling evenly, seemed to extend to infinity. Crescent-shaped crests and twisted cones; a contrast of light and shade; dark red levels which rose to banks against flanks aflame with the sun. In gorges between the red walls, sixty to a hundred and sixty feet deep, a shimmer of silver and green; scattered low bushes and small trees with straight milk-white trunks and supple drooping branches bearing feathery twigs and greyish-green needles.

I held my breath, overwhelmed with amazement and admiration.

With soundless steps Maha made for the first tree, stretched her slim shapely neck and nibbled with obvious delight the yellowish young shoots and the new green needles of the *ghada*—a species of tamarisk. As far as the sand dunes of the Nufud roll, the *ghada* also is found—a boon and a blessing to camel and to man. Its roots are anchored deep in the red waste of pure quartz-sand, and it disdains other desert soil. [37]

Maha knew the Nufud. She followed the tortuous slopes which, as in a storm-tossed ocean, led from trough to crest and, past deep chasms, to the next slope. Impossible to steer a straight course, as in the Hamad or Harra.

The Heirs of Ishmael

● 133 In endless spirals and twists we wound our way, uphill and down dale. Now and then our way led across a small level plain, but this would invariably end in a swelling dune, on the other side of which was always a bowl or a steep crater—a curious configuration, quite different from the sand dunes of the Northern Sahara with which I was familiar.

At times one would be tempted by a stretch of smooth firm ground to take a low sandy bank at a run; but Maha knew better! She knew these treacherous dunes and would not be hurried. They were really dangerous, these undulations of sand with the yielding edge that looked so harmless; and commonly there would be a steep drop into an abyss on the farther side. Sometimes we took more than half an hour to get from one dune to the next. Our small band of camel-riders had hard work to keep from being separated, but perhaps it was the herd-instinct of the camels that kept us from losing sight of each other. Faris entrusted me entirely to Maha's lead. She had spent several months each year in the Nufud and knew, it seemed to me, how to tell danger spots in advance.

This ride in the Nufud remains with me as an imperishable memory—unforgettable, that afternoon when I first beheld its brow lifted menacingly from the plain.

The fascination of the first few days made me eager to traverse the whole breadth of the red desert, though I had to own that a crossing would be exceedingly trying. From our position on the Nufud's western margin it was some three hundred miles to its eastern edge; and if in these dunes our camels made three miles or so in an

The Nufud

hour—but not half of that, as the crow flies—they were 133 ●
doing well. When I expressed my wish to cross it, Faris sensibly protested that we were in no way prepared for such an undertaking and I had to content myself with Faris's extension of our ride southeast on the Nufud's margin. The desert spreads out here, sending broad tongues into the West Arabian plain; and it was over these outcrops that we first travelled, now among high dunes, then, a whole day long, across an upland flat. We rode round weathered sandstone ridges and across low depressions with dried-out rain pools, until we struck the Nufud proper again. There we reached the southernmost point of our journey. According to Faris, another day would take us to Teyma; we were thus within fifty miles of that famous oasis.

Up and down, up and down, went our way, as if over the humps of a myriad crouching, giant camels. At times our beasts became nervous and had to be led; and we even had to slip off our sandals or shoes to make headway, and on oversteep slopes stamp down footholds or shovel out steps with our hands and feet. It was fortunate that we rode *dhaluls*, accustomed from early days to the Nufud. Camels from the flint desert or the lava regions will, indeed, steadfastly refuse to set foot on these unfamiliar sands. [492]

The cheeks of the dunes were saturated with sunshine, glowing a deeper red as the day declined. They gleamed as if they were covered with smooth crimson silk. Were these virgin dunes, never yet trodden by a human being, knowing only the innocent little feet of the dainty gazelles?

❧ XI ❧

Days of Ease

●133 OUR NEXT OBJECTIVE lay before us—the dark sandstone walls of the Jabal Tawil—"the long-drawn-out Mountain." From its foot it is only an eight-hours' ride by camel to the oasis of Jauf at the southern end of the Wadi Sirhan. We shaped our course towards the middle of the slope, passing over steep spurs hemmed in by black rocks. Among the deep clefts of the ancient range Faris knew how to pick out the one that gives access to the Mustanda Pass, over which we could descend into the plain beyond. There we found a small Ruala camp, where we were received with open arms, and where we decided to linger for a whole week, to rest and pasture our *dbaluls*.

[437] It was in this week that Faris secured the silver ankle-rings that he had promised to his betrothed. He rode to Jauf and there bartered one of his young ostriches for the trinkets.

For me it was a memorable week of meditation and reflection, with no lack of new impressions. With Mnahi I roamed the fastnesses of the Tawil; I, just for the mere enjoyment of being there; he, on the lookout for game. He shot a number of ibex, among them some magnificent specimens. But despite the presence of these wild goats, the range is oppressively desolate, its predominant tint dark, even blackish, and the outcrop of red and

❧ XIV ❧

The Hunger March

000 **A**MIR FUAZ, who had gone to Damascus some time before, was to rejoin his migrating tribe when it had reached the *Wudian* district of Rueyshdat. That would be before the end of the week. I took advantage of the brief interval to make an excursion into the Harra with Faris and a few of his followers. I liked it no better than did our camels, though they were fresh saddle-animals.

●133 The Harra is a long stony desert running southeast from the Jabal Druz (or Hauran) and borders on the great Arabian desert-plateau. Volcanic mountains overlook it on the northwest. It is intersected with a network of ancient camel trails, for in the Harra the routes of both the western and eastern Bedouin tribes cross. The
132 region, up to the Jabal Enaza, has the reputation of being the coldest in North Arabia. It has a mean elevation of about three thousand feet, and for months in the year is exposed to chill northeast gales and cold snaps, when the thermometer will drop to six degrees below zero, Celsius (10.8 below freezing-point, Fahrenheit).

133 This year, indeed, the spring was a mild one throughout the region. But the monotonous, undulating, stony surface showed a touch of meagre vegetation only near rain pools in low-lying places. Elsewhere it was all gleaming flat flints, polished pebbles and porous pumice. Rust-coloured, bluish-grey, blackish and speckled splinters covered the floor of the Harra as with a coat of scales,

The Hunger March

one or two layers deep. If you raked them away, you¹³³ found underneath yellowish and reddish sand intermingled with flints. Under the glare of the sun, the ground glittered unbearably, so that one could not look at it long without causing the eyes to smart. There was a steady crunching and clattering as we rode over the stony field, which made very difficult going for our camels. The leathery hoof-pads slipped on the polished stones and they often lost their footing. This unfriendly desert did not please me at all. I must admit, however, that the air was pure and bracing.

When we reached Rueyshdat on the day agreed, Fuaz^{221x} was already there, back from Damascus; and there also was gathered most of his tribe, for the region of Rueysh-^[312] dat seemed to be the only one in Northern Arabia where enough rain-water could be found this spring.

Here the Ruala were watering their camels, probably for the last time before they reached the wells of Abu Rijmeyn, two hundred and sixty miles away. A forced march—a gamble with life and death as the stakes—confronted the whole of the Ruala tribe. They could not go back, neither into the Wadi Sirhan nor into the Jauf Basin. They must go forward, right through enemy territory, under the threat of skirmishes, perhaps real war, with hostile Bedouin tribes. But far more dangerous appeared to the Ruala the contest with Nature. Scanty pasture still clothed the stony uplands and hills; the stems of the tiny plants still held a sprinkling of sap, so that the camels could still find a little nourishment and moisture. Perhaps also God the Merciful would show indulgence to the Ruala and on their march into the

FOOD

118

that they crawl in a long chain urging each other, *siš*, and even riding one on another, *ensák*. *Šahšah* is a plain shut in by the low yet steep slope of a *šarak*, or long flat ridge. *Šefa* is the flat top of such a ridge. The ascent from the lower plain, *šahšah*, to this upper plain, *šefa*, is quite difficult. The *dabiwa* locusts appear sometimes in such enormous masses that they fill the space between the lower and upper plains. 5. *Eltamm* (or *enġama*'), gathered together. *Bel-ašfāk* — that is, what is dearest to and gladdens the heart most of all — are the sweet memories of love; but the poet for the last year has been tortured by unrest, *dawāčč*, and fears, *ħfūk*. *Enħafak*, to be scared, to be filled with suspicion. 6. *Al-aṭrāk* are demonstrations of peace or friendship; *swāmih* is forgiveness. *Šandūk*, a wooden box, frequently lined with tin plates; in inner Arabia it takes the place of our burglar-proof safe. There the poet had hidden many a secret unpleasant to him, but the heart learns them notwithstanding. 8. To allay his grief the poet took out from a wooden canister a few coffee beans, picked out on his palm the impurities mixed with them in the market, and then handed them to his companion, *nedim*. The coffee beans are exposed in the shops in open bags, into which apple cores, date stones, spices, and the like often fall. Such admixtures are called *ʿadf*, a poetical expression for filth. 9. While being roasted coffee should be taken from the fire three times. In its preparation there is nothing more important than the roasting. *Sāk* is the long handle, much the worse for wear, of the pan used for roasting coffee. In the towns this pan is very small, but its handle is strong and ornamented. The poet sits in the room of his house, and the coffee is roasted in the same room before him. The coals of *raza*, which, when ignited, give a strong heat almost without smoke, are kindled on a square earthenware platter resembling a small trough. This hearth is either movable or attached to the earthen floor. During the roasting the window remains open so that the smell of the coffee can pass out of the room. And because the poet's house stands in the market place, the smell of roasted coffee is sensed in all the shops around. In the towns of inner Arabia the market place consists of a narrow street. 18. When the roasted and pounded coffee is being boiled, the burgher closes the window in order to save all its fragrance, which, like the coffee itself, has a narcotic effect on him. 19. The coffee is poured in from above,

272
539^x

[133]

[136]

[415]

[443]

272
252

[354]

[366]

272

831^x
539^x

- The pure-blooded bird knows how to trot both in defense and attack before he is able to use his reason.
10. I said, 'Ah! What a word has reached my heart, which has rebelled,
For my soul's mate has given me to drink snake poison.'
11. But since the day when she beckoned twice to me with her fingers
The full moon [of my bliss] has reached its zenith.

The poet was an unknown Šarāri; the narrator, Mas'ūd as-Sbejhi, who accompanied me on my journey toward the oasis of Tejma'. The poet wakes up towards the end of the night between the twelfth and the eighteenth days of the lunar month; noticing lightning above the high hills 'hutting in the horizon, he asks his comrade to saddle the she-camels, and both then ride as fast as possible over the plain. The fast gait of his animal he compares to the mad gallop of a terrified ostrich and thinks of his sweetheart, who caused him much grief at first but later much gladness.

Verse 3. *Zôr* is the spot in the middle of the lower part of the breast, on which the kneeling camel leans against the ground. When kneeling, the shins of the forelegs touch the *zôr*. To "remove the *zôr* from the shins of the forelegs" means to induce the camel to rise and start. 4. *Rekâriž kâ'i* are plains covered with coarse sand, where mirages may often be observed, mostly at noon. *Rakrûka* is a plain covered with weather-worn debris; *hamâd*, a plain covered with hard gravel and much flint. 5. *Šeda'* means any kind of a spook; it is frequently seen by the animal alone and is supposed to be especially fond of the taste of brains. 9. *Tard* are the movements of attack and defense of a horse in a fight. It takes some time to train a horse to the *pard*, while a pure-blooded male ostrich knows it long before he can use his reason, *kabl jâ'i*. 10. *Šerîč ar-rûh* is a sweetheart. 11. The poet's soul was comforted when his beloved gave him the longed-for sign.

In Praise of a Sweetheart's Kinsmen

*Hala hala jâ 'arab farhân
jâ marhaba bdâbel ar-rîzi
w-ahl az-zêne mâ hom šerdân
hamâjeten lil-mesâwizi*

831^x
639^x● [33
103]

Verse 1. 'Awde climbs high hills to see the route taken by his sweetheart, who prowls or creeps cautiously, *tadebb*, to the channels in order to meet him without being observed. 2. *Karm* is a poetical form of address, referring here to Ruṣna's father. 4. *Neṭājel* is the earth with which a stone-covered grave is filled. The hill of Žijāl is 46 kilometers northeast of al-Ġowf. 5. *Tawil al-Felġ* (the High One With Snow) is the name given by the Rwala to the Hermon mountains, which are covered with snow most of the year. Ḥājel lies about six hundred kilometers southeast of Hermon. Bird and Rwāf are mountains about four hundred kilometers south of the Hawrān. 6. Ḥāmi Raṭif rises beyond Tiberias. *Dannū ar-raḥājel*, bring hither the female pack camels, is the order of the tent owner when he intends to move. *Mezāhīr* are the camels when laden with tents, utensils, and litters for the women. *Salaf* are warriors riding one or two kilometers in front of the laden camels. 7. *Enkāf* is the return from a raid without success and without booty. 'Awde will not desist until Ruṣna becomes his wife. 8. He who tries to drink from a wooden cup, but continues talking all the time, cannot pay attention to what he is doing, so that the cup often inclines to one side and the water is spilt. Then his comrades correct him with the words: "O So and So, the cup is tilted, *al-žedaḥ mutaḡāweren*." Likewise one who does wrong also bends, partly because he is ashamed, partly with intent to deceive. Abu Tamad makes straight or rebukes such a crooked fellow, *ṣeṣa* kill 'ājel, and thus prevents injury.

THE WEDDING

585

The wedding, as a rule, takes place immediately after the wooing. In the morning some one—even a slave—kills before the bridegroom's tent a she-camel, as a *qbiḥt al-'ara*, wedding sacrifice. Neither of the betrothed needs to be present. Towards evening a small round tent, *heḡra*, is pitched by the women near by and the bridal bed made there. Among the poorer people a corner of their inhabited tent is partitioned off for the young couple. Two or three of the bridegroom's female relatives go to the bride to bring her towards sunset to the prepared tent. A little later the bridegroom also enters, after which the tent is closed altogether, *jehaḡḡeren 'alejh heḡraten*.

CHILDREN

255

852
539*

rakkābaha mamdūh
jakloṣ w-lā jahāf
tesell selil al-ma'
taḥṭom 'ala-l-aslāf
jarmi w-lā jeḥṭi
jak'od w-lā jenšāf.

Oh, that noble young she-camel,
 How swift her gait!
 She is ridden by Mamdūh,
 Who strikes down all in front of him and knows no fear.
 The she-camel as quickly as running water vanishes,
 Running ahead of the first troop,
 While he shoots, never missing,
 And bends down so that he cannot be seen.

Mamdūh was the youngest and most daring son of Prince Sattām. In a fight no enemy could stand against him. The enemy flees, and Mamdūh strikes him a blow from behind, so that he falls on the neck of his animal. *Jakloṣ* means either to bend or to knock forward a saddle or rider. *Selil al-ma'* is a wild flood which dashes down suddenly and disappears as quickly. Many a valley — or rather channel — is as much as two hundred kilometers long and dry for years. If copious rain of long duration falls, the waters rush with lightning speed through the channel, surprise the Bedouins who happen to be camping at its lower end, and as quickly vanish again. Such a flood is not a *sejil*, brook or stream, but a *selil*, a temporary torrent. Mamdūh's she-camel appears as unexpectedly, but just as speedily is gone owing to her great endurance in running. *Salaf* is a troop of warriors riding at the head of a migrating tribe. Mamdūh's she-camel constantly runs ahead of the *salaf*. *Jak'od* signifies that Mamdūh, a youngster still, bends down at every shot in order to take better aim; he thus cannot be seen behind the neck of his animal. In 1909 he was only eighteen years of age.

[133] ●

RAISING OF CHILDREN

Until their seventh year both boys and girls remain with their mother, going to their father only for an occasional talk. If their mother is not divorced by their father, they live in the women's compartment and help with the lighter

855

CHAPTER XXIV

TERMS APPLIED TO PHYSIOGRAPHIC FEATURES

101

131

The Rwala tribe camps in northern Arabia between latitude 28° and 34° north and longitude 36° and 42° east. For the various topographical features of this area the tribe has strictly defined terms, of which we noted the following:

133

104

'Abd: black cone

Abraḥ: dark rock partly covered with reddish sand

'Ada: both dead and live bushes, grasses, excrements, clay, coarse sand, and any débris brought down by a torrent

'Adra: pastures defiled by the excrements of countless herds

'Ajārāt or 'ejārāt: huge, flat-topped elevations

'Akla: a well by a channel or in a valley, which dries in after heavy rains and has to be restored

'Akūla: a rather small, low depression in a plain, where the rain water gathers

'Alāme (pl., 'alāmāt): landmark

'Amijja: the pear-shaped hollow of a moḡr rain well

'Anza (dimin., 'unejza): a long flat-topped hillock rising from a plain

'Arejī: a long arm of a sand desert

'Arḡa (pl., 'arḡāt): a turn of a valley or gully

'Arḡūb: a slope; steep rocky hillside

'Aadma: scorched tract of land without pasture or water

Aḡba'a (pl., aḡābe'): "fingers," a row of low isolated cones

Baḡḡa: soil from which the rain water runs off quickly

Barārīt: desolate, waterless regions; camel paths across such regions

Barbak: a small artificial rain pond

Barḡūs: movable sharp ridge of sand dunes or drifts, bare of vegetation

Barrāde (pl., barrārid): a path trodden out by camels between stones or gravel

Bāḡen: broad and deep valley without any channel

Baḡhe (pl., baḡhāt): a shallow river bed

Baḡin (pl., baḡān): a low hillside, slope, base

PHYSIOGRAPHIC FEATURES

677

Baṭn: long depression bordered on one side by a high slope

Beḍ: abundant or large spring

Bejdha: a plateau giving a wide view

Berka (pl., *burk*): a rocky hill partly covered by sand

Bilād 'adijje: the salubrious districts of an-Nefūd and al-Ḥamād

Bilād mābijje: the unhealthy districts of al-Rūṭa, Ḡowlān, al-Mārib, Kerajāt al-Meleḥ, and al-Ḡūba

Bīr (pl., *bijār*): a well in general; well with spring water

Būra: a narrow, deep ditch

Burrēz: rock salt; also mica

Čettān: a rock or stone which falls to pieces, crumbles

Dabbe: a rough ridge of flat-topped hillocks

Dahl (pl., *duḥāl*): a long, subterranean cavern where water bubbles out, doline

Daww: a vast, elongated, level plain enclosed by two mountain chains

Demlūr: an isolated, blunted butte in a wide plain

Derwa: a sharp summit

Dīre: the Bedouins' term for a settled territory where they get their supplies and the inhabitants of which pay them tribute

'Ebb (pl., 'ebūb): a shallow dale, gully, bay

'Edd: a perpetual spring well

'Edwe (pl., 'edwāt): low place in a ~~south~~ valley incapable of holding rain water and therefore suitable for pitching tents

Ekšš: a mixture of large stones and gravel

'Eleb (pl., 'elebān): an isolated table-topped hillock

'Elejm (pl., 'alājem): an isolated elongated hill rising from a plain

'Erf: isolated hill, visible from afar

'Erna (pl., 'erna or 'arāna): channel of a torrent; channel in a steep hillside

'Eri (pl., 'urāk): long spur of sand

Fāḡ (pl., *fāḡān*): a wide rocky hollow

Far (pl., *frā*): the starting-point of a gully or valley; a branch gully of a side valley

Faraḡ: a spacious area where no danger threatens the Bedouin

Farāḡ (pl., *frāḡ*): a funnel-like pit in the sand

133

104

- 133 *Fazr* (dimin., *fzér*): a crevice in clay soil where the rain water accumulates; a narrow, deep channel
- 104 *Fejjj*: a hollow of some width between two hills, with a road running through it
- Fejza* (pl., *fijéz*): a fertile depression
- Fekára*: stony table-land
- Felk* (pl., *flák*): an elongated sand dune
- Gábijs*: a shallow pit in the earth into which water for camels is poured
- Gádde* (pl., *gúádd* or *gúád*): path trodden out by camels in the flat desert
- Gál* (pl., *gílán*): the bank of a river channel; the slope of a gully or valley; a long, steep escarpment by which a plateau falls off to a lower level
- Gam*: rain water
- Gaww* or *gaw*: a basin or valley with spring wells having water enough to supply big camps
- Geba*: an open cistern
- Gebb* (pl., *gbebe* or *gebáb*): a deep rain well or cistern, wider at the bottom than at the top
- Gebw*: a natural hole in a rocky plain, as much as two meters deep, where rain water accumulates. Sometimes it can be covered with a big stone
- Gelad*: a rocky desert
- Gelibe*: a low, flat-topped elevation
- Gemedé* (pl., *gemed*): the stony foot of a *gál*
- Ger*: a region covered with white or gray sand, where nothing will grow
- Ghara*: a desolate plain
- Gilf*: a steep, narrow, rough ridge
- Gúba* (pl., *gúbát*): a deep valley; a basin in a plain
- Gubb*: an artificial well with spring water
- Gufra* (pl., *gfár* or *gafar*): low ground in a plain, where rain water gathers
- Gurf*: a crevice; steep river bank
- Habára*: mouse holes
- Habb* (pl., *hbáb*): long, narrow strip of rocky land bordered by sand dunes
- Habée*: narrow, elongated depression as much as three meters wide and filled with rain water

PHYSIOGRAPHIC FEATURES

679

- Habiye*: a rain water hole
- Habir*: stony hollow forming a passage between long sand dunes
- Habl* (pl., *hbál*): a narrow long sand drift
- Habra* (pl., *habári*): a large or small depression in a plain in which the rain water gathers
- Habt*: a basin covered with gravel and sand, where small ponds are sometimes formed by rain water which cannot run off
- Hadak*: a round hole in either clayey or stony, but soft, soil into which water runs
- Hadlál* (pl., *hadáíl*): shallow valley without a visible channel
- Hala'*: volcano
- Hala'*: a region where the camels will find no sustenance in any particular year; all that lies beyond the camp
- Hálát*: an area covered with basalt or lava, through which neither horse nor man can move except by a few very narrow paths
- Haliže*: an artificial, subterranean hollow; a cave
- Halk al-želib*: the opening of a well
- Hall*: a path or trail through the sand
- Hamád*: a barren, scorched-appearing plain covered with small gravel
- Harba'a*: a region of rough hillocks
- Harime* (pl., *harájem*): a narrow gully shut in by steep hill-sides
- Hariže* (pl., *harájež*): a shallow well (from which water can be drawn by hand)
- Hasa'*: rocky lowland covered with a layer of clay, sand, and gravel, under which the rain water gathers
- Haqa'*: gravel
- Hašm* (pl., *hšüm*): a "nose" or steep spur of a ridge
- Hawája*: shallow, artificial, stone- and mud-walled reservoirs on a rocky surface, where rain water is caught
- Haur'a*: a fenced-in date grove
- Hažba* or *hažb* (pl., *ahžáb*): an extensive but isolated rocky hill
- Hazm*: a rather narrow but long height sinking down into a plain steeply on the one side and gradually on the other
- Hebže*: undulating country where it is possible to hide but also to be attacked from ambush
- Hefne*: a round hole by the river bank or at the foot of a hillside, where rain water gathers; it resembles the *radir* hole, but the latter is usually found in the river bed itself

133
104

- 133 *Hejd*: the foot of a hill; a slope shutting in a plain
- 104 *Hemma* or *hama*: lava
- Herr* (pl., *herara*): a river channel in clay soil, with steep banks
- Hess* (pl., *hesjân*): a depression in a rocky river bed into which the rain water runs under sand and gravel
- Hôr*: a depression where the rain water forms numerous pools
- Hûbe* (pl., *hûbât*): a circular, natural rocky wall shutting in small level spaces called *kräjje* (pl., *kräjjât*)
- Hûbta*: a depression in a flat rock, where rain water can accumulate
- Îfa*: undulating plain covered in places with sand
- Kâ* (pl., *kân*): a flat plain where the rain water forms no brooks
- Ka'ara* (pl., *ka'ar*): a large hollow shut in on three sides by steep slopes
- Kara'* or *akra'*: a ridge
- Kâra* (pl., *kâr*): an isolated table mountain; a mesa
- Kas'a* (pl., *kâ'*): a shallow natural depression in a rocky surface, where the rain water remains
- Kasîme* (pl., *kasîjem*): isolated sand dunes in a rocky plain
- Kasr*: a large but shallow basin which becomes a pond after unusually heavy rains
- Kaşar* (pl., *kâr*): the last spur of a mountain range
- Kaşfâr*: a spring the water of which does not flow actively but merely trickles drop by drop
- Kejê*: shallow holes in a channel
- [202] *Keana*: an isolated conical hill on top of which a beacon is lit whenever the enemy means to attack herds grazing far from the camp
- Kîr* or *hummar*: bitumen
- Kräjje* (pl., *kräjjât*): roughly circular basin surrounded by walls of crumbling stone
- Lâl*: a level plain glistening in the sun
- Lappâfa*: a hillock with mica
- Luruf*: the eroded border of a sand desert
- Mahâl*: a great distance between two wells
- Mahâri*: the last spurs of a range of hillocks
- Mahfâr* (pl., *mahfâr*): artificial rain pool

PHYSIOGRAPHIC FEATURES

681

Maḥira: a small flat area flooded and thus fertilized by rain water

Marabb: low-lying ground where the rain water of a channel is absorbed

Maṣmad (pl., maṣmad): an extensive but shallow crevice at the foot of a hillside, where the rain water remains. It is of greater dimensions than the *ḥalta*

Maṣna' (pl., maṣna'): a rocky flat area artificially changed into a large reservoir

Maṣabb: a junction of two channels

Matne: flat-topped elevation rising gradually from the surrounding plain

Ma'w: hollow on two sides bounded by sand dunes and on two merging into rocky plain

Meḥāze: barren tract between two camping grounds

Meḥneb: a slope shutting in a valley through which a creek runs

Mekīr (pl., maḥājer): a basin where much water is absorbed; small hole in clay soil where the rain water accumulates

Mekmekijje: waterless desert

Mela: a plain covered with a thin layer of alluvium

Mellāḥa: salina

Meṣ' (pl., meṣ'an): a shallow branch channel in a valley through which the rain water runs off into the main channel

Mirāze: the highest conical hill near a camp, whence warning signals can be given to herdsmen and watchers on similar hills near other camps

Mīdī: a shallow well in a clay basin into which rain water slowly percolates through the soil

Mukra or **moḥr** (pl., mākūr): half natural, half artificial well, five to ten meters deep, dug in a rock, into which the rain water flows. The opening, which is usually narrow, can be covered with a stone of moderate size

Munḥār: a conical hill

Mutribe: a path through a lava field

Nab: spring water

Nānije (pl., nāndri): a vast sand plain

Nāra: height conspicuous from afar

Naba' (pl., nabjān): isolated dome-shaped hillock

Nadra: spur of a rock

Nadwīje: a small spring disappearing in gravel

133
104

[312]

133

Nî: a ditch around a tent for draining off the rain water

104

Nijâf: a boundless stony plain

Nukra: basin into which much rain water runs

Nurur (pl., *nurûr*): a hillock composed of white and dark strata

Obfa: a deep basin

Ra'an (pl., *ra'ân*): a line of rocky hillocks

Rabh: the small stones which scatter under the hoofs of a galloping camel

Radha: a cavity in a stony slope, into which rain water runs

Radîfa (pl., *radâjef*): a low spot in a wide, shallow river bed where the rain water gathersRadîr (pl., *rudrân* or *rudr*): a hole in a channel with steep banks where rain water remains for a long time

Rahârih: a wide plain glistening in the sun

Raḡrûka: a plain covered with small, crumbled stones

Râr: a precipice; crevice; canyon

Rarb (pl., *rarûb*): a reservoir from which water is distributedRarmûl (pl., *rarâmîl*): an isolated, low, narrow hill

Rasm: an artificial well left unfinished

Raṣrâṣ (or *raṣrâṣijje*): a plain with rock surfaces worn flat by wind and sand, with pebbles and gravel scattered around. When a camel treads on such pebbles, the friction against the rocky surface produces a sound not unlike the word *raṣraṣ*, which gives such plains their nameReḡde (pl., *riḡdât*): a stratum of solid rock in a steep slope

Rî: a narrow, short defile

Rif: a region with good pasture, good crops

Riḡle (pl., *riḡl*): a shallow valley, particularly one tributary to a main valleyRiṣijje or *riṣe*: a shallow valley in an undulating stony plainRiss (pl., *rsûs*): a well without waterRowz (pl., *riẓân*): lower ground in a level desert, into which silt is deposited by rain water, producing a growth of perennials, sometimes even of annuals; a meadow

Ruẓuma: a stone, boulder, rock

Ṣa'ara: a spring which merely trickles and does not flow

Sabha: salt marsh

Ṣa'fe: an elevation not necessarily high, but prominent

Ṣafha (pl., *ṣfâh*): the base of a mountainṢâhek (pl., *ṣhûk* or *ṣekân*): the highest summit of a range

PHYSIOGRAPHIC FEATURES

683

- Sahl** (pl., *shûl*): a narrow channel dammed-in by rocks, where rain water accumulates under gravel 133
104
- Şahşah**: a plain shut in by low but steep bluffs
- Şama** (pl., *şâmât*): hills of different colors; dark undulating country covered in some places with rose-tinged sand
- Şa'nûn**: a deep well with no water
- Şarâhiğ** or **şahâriğ**: deep rock crevices with a narrow opening where the rain water remains pure for a long time
- Şarha**: a plain covered with young annuals
- Şafne**: short branch valley; a shallow channel in a plain
- Şawwâne**: tract or hill covered with flints, *şawwân*
- Şedawijje**: a plain covered with dark-brown gravel
- Şe'en**: creek
- Şefa'**: a flat top of a long ridge
- Şeffa** (pl., *şfâf*): the brink of a plateau sinking steeply down to a valley
- Şe'ib** (pl., *še'ibân* or *še'bân*): a main valley or watercourse of an intermittent stream
- Selîl al-ma'**: a wild torrent, appearing and disappearing with equal suddenness
- Semâh**: a plain covered with coarse sand, with nothing to hinder rapid movement
- Şen'** (pl., *şnû'*): an artificial hollow in a rocky surface, where rain water remains
- Senûd**: the upper parts of a valley
- Şerje**: narrow gully
- Sihi**: a crevice in a stony plain, where rain water remains a long time
- Sirdâb**: subterranean passage
- Sowh** (pl., *sihân* or *sijâh*): a valley without a channel or with one partly filled in; shallow depression
- Şrejj**: a narrow mountain spur
- Swâhiğ**: small paths
- Swâhiğ**: high, steep, impassable mountains
- Tablât** or **tbâl**: hollow knolls, domes, or "bubbles"
- Taffa** (pl., *tfâf*): a plateau cleft by a deep valley
- Tâğ**: the opening of a snake hole
- Tanahğ** (pl., *tanâheğ*): a hillock serving as a landmark
- Târ**: a long, high, steep escarpment
- Tarab** (pl., *tarbân*): a crevice in a rock or a small hole in a rocky gully, where rain water gathers

684

RWALA BEDOUINS

133

104

Tarak (pl., *ṭrāk* or *ṭrāk*): a long, low ridge

Ter (pl., *ṭlā'*): a small gully ending in a tributary of a main valley

Tell (pl., *ṭlāl*): an isolated hill standing high above the surrounding country; volcano

Temile (pl., *ṭemājel*): a small depression in a rocky river bed, into which the rain water runs under the gravel

Tenijje (pl., *ṭenāja*): a mountain defile; passage between two rows of tents

Ṭomijje: hillocks, slopes, and depressions formed in sand by the wind

Ūd: a narrow valley in rocks

Wādi (pl., *wudijān*): a long and wide main valley

Waššāš: cascade

Wizij (pl., *wuzāje*): cavities in the solid stony strata of a steep hillside

Wuṭi: ditch around a tent for draining off the rain water

Zadme: a projection from a rocky hillside

Zalta (pl., *zlat*): a crevice in a rocky slope, at least one meter deep, where rain water accumulates

Zel': an isolated, rugged mountain, usually of granite

Zelīb (pl., *ḵulbān*): a well, whether walled and deep or unwalled and wide

Zemle (pl., *zaml*): a low elevation; a rise

Zerāze: vast arid plains

Zoboṭ (pl., *ṭubṭān*): the clay foot of a *ḡāl*.

685-686 BLANK